

10 May 78

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To: [redacted]
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Room 1C 925
Pentagon (DIA Center)

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Per our phone conversation, attached are some excerpts from the [redacted] March 1973 report, Strategic/Tactical Warning Interface, prepared by the committee headed by [redacted]

These are the short annex sections on the Watch Committee/ NIC and the Indico function within OCI. [redacted] (11 pages)

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Also attached is a short Job Summary, from OCI, Feb.72, on the INDICO function in OCI. (5 pages)

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ATTACHMENT 1

WATCH COMMITTEE/NIC OPERATIONS

DETAILS

1. The Charter

The intelligence community's legal charter (DCID 1/5) calls upon the USIB's Watch Committee to follow strategic warning, and defines the terms of reference as follows:

A. Name

Watch Committee of the USIB

B. Mission

To provide the United States Intelligence Board with the earliest possible intelligence warning of and a continuing judgment on, Sino-Soviet Bloc intentions to engage in aggressive action by regular or irregular armed forces.

C. Functions

(1) To obtain from all USIB members and from other departments as appropriate the information and intelligence required by the mission of the Watch Committee, formulating intelligence collection requirements and recommending priorities necessary.

(2) To carry on a continuing analysis of information and intelligence from all sources to identify developments, patterns and trends in Sino-Soviet Bloc activities which could provide indications of intentions to engage in aggressive action.

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(3) Based on the foregoing, to develop conclusions or provisional estimative judgments as necessary as to Sino-Soviet intentions to engage in aggressive action; to consider current and prospective situations and developments which could lead to aggressive action by the Bloc; and to report promptly to the USIB the Committee's findings in these matters including such divergent views as may be recorded; and, following USIB action to provide for dissemination to other recipients as appropriate.

D. With this as guidance, the Watch Committee normally summarizes its findings, in its regular report, in the following language:

Based on available evidence we conclude that neither the USSR, China nor North Korea will initiate major military action in the near future against the US, its overseas forces or its Allies.

II. Mechanics for Handling Strategic Warning

A. As noted above, the Watch Committee/National Indications Center (NIC) structure provides the formally established USIB framework for handling strategic warning.

B. One feature of this structure should be noted from the start. By and large it constitutes an intelligence reporting mechanism superimposed on existing current intelligence units, and it draws upon the expertise of these units in order to arrive at its strategic warning judgments. The system thus avoids the establishment

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of any sizable analytical "empires," and instead relies upon capable and experienced analysts in existing current intelligence offices to "take a second look," in the warning context.

C. Thus, the Watch Committee, aided by its small staff at the NIC, sets up a "parallel reporting circuit," a sort of devil's advocate reporting discipline. This "satelliting" system is designed to prod intelligence analysts in the USIB community into narrowing their concentration and directing it toward one goal -- the analysis of intelligence specifically related to warning of enemy attack. This system includes eliciting intelligence from appropriate analytical units in the field.

D. The system provides for a regular reporting discipline, through the weekly meeting of the Watch Committee which produces a regular report, and through the system of approval of this report each week by the USIB principals. In addition, special meetings have been called when necessary to review more urgent indications of hostilities.

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E. The Watch Committee was formed in January 1951, shortly after the Chinese intervened in Korea. It replaced several more limited warning groups in the separate agencies. The National Indications Center (NIC) was set up as its executive staff in 1954. The goal was to create one committee/center where warning information would come together for quick analysis.

F. CIA by charter provides the Chairman of the Watch Committee. Over the years this position has always been filled by a high-ranking CIA official, either by the Deputy Director, or one of the top assistants to the Director. Currently the Acting Chairman is Richard Lehman, Director of Current Intelligence (the head of OCI). He replaced Gen. Robert Cushman a year ago at the head of the Committee.

G. The Committee working membership, at roughly the Colonel level, is two members each from CIA, DIA, NSA, and State, and one each from the FBI and the AEC. The Director NIC has a full voice at the table; and NIC staffers as well as officers from the service intelligence organizations attend the meetings as observers.

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III. The NIC

A. The National Indications Center (NIC) itself is a small complex located at 1E821 in the Pentagon. Its area houses the large conference room used by the Watch Committee, offices for use of the analytical staff, and a Watch Center manned 24 hours.

B. The NIC has a small interagency staff. There are approximately 30 people, including 15 from DIA (including Army and Air but no Navy rep), 9 from CIA and 4 from NSA, but there are none from State. Including the CIA civilian Director and DIA Deputy (a Colonel), there are 12 analytical personnel. Ten people are assigned to the 24-hour Watch function.

C. The equipment consists of secure grey phone and KY-3 (green) connections, wire services, a pneumatic tube to the DIA (the relay point at the Pentagon for much of NIC's traffic), and a COINS outlet. Other equipment such as LDX, can be used at the NMCC or DIA-NMIC.

D. The primary function of the analytical staff is to review indications intelligence and prepare the draft Watch Report. The Staff also carries out some research on warning topics.

E. The NIC also produces, and disseminates widely in the warning community, the Watch Officers' Notes (WONS),

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a daily collection of warning intelligence items.

Most of these items are reproduced in the WONS without further NIC comment.

IV The Reporting Cycle

A. The Watch Committee meets regularly on Wednesday mornings, and special meetings are called periodically--at any time of day or night--to discuss urgent items of warning intelligence.

B. The reporting cycle is kicked off on Fridays by the NIC, which sends out a Preliminary Agenda calling attention to various developments of possible interest for the next week's report. This agenda is circulated widely within USIB agencies, and DIA cables it to certain field commands and warning centers.

C. The agencies turn in their contributions to NIC on Monday, and NIC drafts the report and circulates it by Tuesday noon. The agencies grey-phone their changes to NIC late Tuesday.

D. Wednesday morning the Committee meets at NIC and reviews the text and debates the recommended changes. It may also discuss other warning items which are not included in the report.

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E. Thursday the Watch Report is reviewed as the first order of business of the meeting of USIB. If USIB is not meeting, the report is coordinated telephonically. This may take some anguished hours, because USIB principals have to be tracked down in order to get their personal agreement.

F. The final version of the report is cabled to some field stations by CIA and to various major commands by DIA, and disseminated in Washington Friday morning. A

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The Product

A. In Washington the report is circulated to policy level officials within the USIB agencies and the parent organizations. Its warning message, by nature of the present world situation, is obviously often a negative, "all-clear" signal, so the report is probably not in most cases shown to the highest policy level officials.

~~On some recent occasions, however, the report has been shown to the Secretary of State.~~

B. In any case, the warning message does require the reading and concurrence of the principals of USIB--the

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chiefs of the various intelligence agencies. This system therefore at the very least assures that the report, bland as it may often appear, at least tells the intelligence chiefs that the USIB's Watch Committee has once again reviewed intelligence bearing on a potential surprise military attack on the US and intelligence concerning broader enemy strategy in any ongoing fighting which involves US troops.

C. In addition, the system always provides the option to USIB member agencies of calling a special meeting of the Committee to review some possibly alarming indicator. In the days of Colder War, these special meetings were held at least several times a year; none have taken place since 1970.

D. The report seems to be well-received by certain field elements as a good capsulized regular roundup of potentially scary situations. [redacted]

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a uniquely USIB community weekly report, and often are quick to note nuances in the tone of the reporting.

E. Generally the bland quality of the report is one of its greatest weaknesses. This invariably results

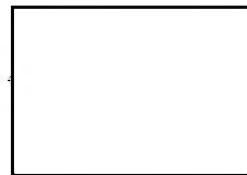
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from the need to fall back on compromise language to paper over major differences between agency "positions." There can be footnotes but there usually are not.



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The INDICO Function:

In addition, OCI provides heavy support to the Watch Committee mechanism, and is the main focal point for CIA contact with the Committee and with the NIC.

OCI traditionally has filled the post of Director of NIC, and supplies the three analysts of the CIA contingent at NIC.

In ~~CIA~~, the Watch Committee/NIC support revolves around the INDICO (or Indications Control) office of the OCI Production Staff. The INDICO staff, of three officers, has the following functions:

1. The INDICO Chief attends the weekly Watch Committee meetings as the representative of CIA.
2. Reviews the content of the draft Watch Reports with the pertinent experts from among the 40 current intelligence analysts in OCI, OSR, and OER who follow strategic warning matters, achieves coordination of the draft, and receives suggestions for changes in the draft.
3. Reviews vast numbers of incoming intelligence reports and selects significant items of warning intelligence for use in the Watch Report or for briefing purposes.

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4. Sees to it that the Chairman of the Watch Committee is sufficiently briefed on all pertinent items of indications/warning significance.
5. Conducts liaison with a large number of analytical shops in and outside the Agency. This involves not only eliciting information and comments from the desk analysts in the DDI producing offices but also passing them useful information. It also entails continuing liaison with the personnel of the NIC at the Pentagon, and DIA, INR, and NSA personnel.
6. Maintains continuity on a large number of substantive developments in the areas of specific interest to the USIB Watch Committee.
7. Gives briefings to various groups inside and outside of CIA on the workings of the warning intelligence mechanism and the INDICO staff.
8. Works with the Requirements Staff, and particularly carries on liaison with the Sigint and photo intelligence elements of the Requirements Staff, in order to keep up to date on pertinent developments.
9. Serves on various committees concerning warning activities.

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